

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 SAB-01 SCCT-02

DRC-01 /141 W

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R 251505Z APR 74

FM USINT DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 389

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USUN NEW YORK 040

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0456

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

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KUWAIT PASS MUSCAT

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR

1. SUMMARY: DURING APRIL 24 COURTESY CALL YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR PEKIC INDICATED, INTER ALIA, THAT SOVIETS DID NOT GET EVERYTHING THEY WANTED OUT OF THE SYRIANS DURING RECENT MOSCOW VISIT; THE ESCALATION ON THE GOLAN IS NOT SOVIET INSPIRED; THE SYRIANS WANT AND NEED A DIS-ENGAGEMENT ON THE GOLAN AND ARE PLACING GREAT HOPES ON DR. KISSINGER'S EFFORTS; THE SOVIET UNION MUST APPRECIATE THE MIDDLE EAST'S TRADITIONAL TIES TO THE WEST; THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT CONCENTRATE SOLELY ON EGYPT TO THE EXCLUSION OF OTHER ARAB STATES AND PARTICULARLY SYRIA IN PURSUIT OF ITS INTERESTS IN THE AREA; THERE IS ROOM IN THE MIDDLE EAST FOR BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION; PRESIDENT ASAD'S POSITION CURRENTLY IS STRONG. END SUMMARY.

2. ON APRIL 24 YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR, VOJISLAV PEKIC, MADE A RETURN COURTESY CALL ON ME. DURING THE CALL HE MADE THE FOLLOWING SALIENT POINTS.

3. SYRIAN/SOVIET RELATIONS: THE SOVIETS WERE NOT AS SUCCESSFUL AS THEY WOULD HAVE LIKED DURING PRESIDENT ASAD'S RECENT TRIP TO MOSCOW. ACCORDING TO RELIABLE INFORMATION, THE SOVIETS WERE HOPING TO CROWN THE VISIT WITH A SYRIAN/SOVIET TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP SIMILAR TO THE IRAQI/SOVIET TREATY. THE SYRIANS, HOWEVER, WERE NOT WILLING TO GO THAT FAR AND WILL NOT AS LONG AS THERE IS HOPE OF OBTAINING A REASONABLE ARAB/ISRAELI PEACE SETTLEMENT WHICH IN TURN WILL ENABLE THE SYRIANS TO PURSUE A MORE BALANCED POLICY VIS-A-VIS BOTH GREAT POWERS.

4. SITUATION ON THE GOLAN: THE SOVIETS ARE NOT BEHIND THE ESCALATION OF THE FIGHTING ON THE GOLAN. THE SYRIANS HAVE BEEN MAKING ALL THE DECISIONS IN THIS REGARD, ALTHOUGH THE RECENT SOVIET ASSURANCE OF A CONTINUED FLOW OF ARMS IS CONFIDENTIAL

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CERTAINLY A FACTOR BEHIND THE SYRIAN WILLINGNESS TO ESCALATE THE FIGHTING IN THE AREA. THE SYRIANS, HOWEVER, ARE PURSUING A LIMITED POLITICAL OBJECTIVE WHICH IS TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE ISRAELIS THAT SYRIA WILL NOT BE PUSHED AROUND EITHER ON THE BATTLEFIELD OR AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE.

5. SYRIAN INTENTIONS TOWARDS DISENGAGEMENT: THE SYRIANS

WANT AND NEED A DISENGAGEMENT ON THE GOLAN AND THEY ARE PLACING GREAT HOPES IN DR. KISSINGER'S EFFORTS. GENERAL TLAS STATED AS MUCH TO THE AMBASSADOR IN A RECENT DISCUSSION IN WHICH HE INDICATED THAT SYRIA, ALTHOUGH PREPARED TO GO TO WAR, IS STILL HOPING FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BOTH WITH REGARD TO A DISENGAGEMENT AND WITH REGARD TO A FINAL ARAB/ISRAEL PEACE. THE SYRIANS ARE, THEREFORE, PLACING GREAT HOPES IN DR. KISSINGER'S EFFORTS. SHOULD HE FAIL, HOWEVER, THE SITUATION IN SYRIA WILL DEFINITELY TAKE A TURN TOWARDS EXTREMISM AND ANOTHER WAR WILL BECOME INEVITABLE.

6. SOVIET FUTURE IN AREA: THE SOVIETS, OF COURSE, WISH TO MAINTAIN THEIR ROLE IN THE AREA AND THEIR CURRENT EFFORTS TO COURT THE SYRIANS ARE AN EXAMPLE OF THIS DESIRE. THE SOVIETS, HOWEVER, HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT ARMS DEALS OR A USE OF LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTIES WILL NOT ASSURE THE FUTURE OF "SOCIALISM" IN THE AREA. WHATEVER "SOCIALISM" DOES FINALLY DEVELOP IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LOCAL HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS FACTORS. IN THIS REGARD, THE MIDDLE EAST HAS TRADITIONALLY LOOKED TO THE WEST AND NOT TO THE SOVIET UNION FOR SUCH THINGS AS TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION. THESE TRADITIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WILL DOUBTLESS REAPPEAR IN A POST-SETTLEMENT MIDDLE EAST AND THE SOVIET UNION AND THE OTHER "SOCIALIST" COUNTRIES WILL HAVE TO ADJUST THEIR POLICIES ACCORDINGLY.

7. UNITED STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST: THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AS DID THE SOVIET UNION IN THINKING THAT EGYPT IS THE KEY TO THE ARAB WORLD. WHILE CERTAINLY THE LARGEST OF THE ARAB STATES, IT IS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE OTHER ARABAS AS THEIR SOLE SPOKESMAN, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE DEATH OF NASSER. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD

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REALIZE THAT SYRIA CAN ALSO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE AREA, PARTICULARLY SINCE IT HAS LONG BEEN CONSIDERED BY THE OTHER ARAB STATES AS REPRESENTING MORE GENUINELY ARAB ASPIRATIONS AND NATIONALISM THAN HAS EGYPT. THE SOVIET UNION BECAUSE OF ITS LOSS OF EGYPT HAS NOW BEGUN TO REALIZE THAT PERHAPS SYRIA PRESENTS IT WITH A BETTER OPPORTUNITY IN THE ARAB WORLD THAN EGYPT. SYRIA, HOWEVER, WISHES TO PURSUE AN INDEPENDENT POLICY AND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DO SO.

8. UNITED STATES/SOVIET RELATIONS IN MIDDLE EAS

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